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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 000244

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA PROTESTS ON GREEN ZONE ACCESS ISSUES

REF: BURGER-HORNER EMAIL 12/27/06

Classified By: POL/C Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) MFA Head of Department for Iraq Fazli Corman called us in Feb. 2 to protest "increasingly inappropriate treatment" by U.S. authorities in Iraq (text of note in para. 5). Corman recounted two attempts by Turkish Embassy officials to access the International Zone (IZ). On Jan. 31, the Turkish DCM's motorcade was "subjected to a thorough search." During the search, a Turkish official reportedly took a photograph of the proceedings. During this time, the Turks allege that a U.S. security official raised the "trap," puncturing the tire of a Turkish vehicle. After the motorcade entered the IZ, it then stopped to change the tire, at which time U.S. personnel approached the Turks and confiscated the camera. Corman alleged that U.S. personnel treated the Turkish DCM discourteously.

¶2. (C) The Turkish Embassy's Administrative Attache attempted to enter the IZ on Feb. 1 to deliver letters from the Turkish Ambassador to various IZ locations, Corman continued. He alleged that the motorcade was ordered to remain outside the IZ, and Turkish personnel were ordered to exit the vehicles for a thorough search. Corman said that Turkish security personnel evaluated the situation and -- citing numerous attacks on vehicles awaiting IZ entry -- deemed the U.S. request as putting the Turkish personnel in danger. The motorcade departed.

¶3. (C) Corman said that the Feb. 1 incident was for him more disturbing, in that the Turkish Embassy believed it was in retaliation for the Jan. 31 incident. We responded that there are two sides to every story, but that we would pass on Turkish concerns to Washington and to Embassy Baghdad. We also reminded Corman that taking photos at these checkpoints is a serious matter.

¶4. (C) Corman reminded us that the Turkish Embassy's Third Secretary, Alper Aktas, has been refused an IZ badge by U.S.

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authorities, and that during his Dec. 3 farewell call the former Turkish Ambassador had handed Ambassador Khalilzad a note on the matter (see ref email chain--text of MFA note on the badging issue in para.6). Corman said the new Turkish

Ambassador to Baghdad, Derya Kanbay, would raise these issues in his Feb. 6 courtesy call with Ambassador Khalilzad.

15. (C) Text of Turkish MFA note on IZ Access Incidents (handed to us Feb. 2)--as received:

BEGIN TEXT

2 February 2007

NOTE FOR THE US EMBASSY - ANKARA

Turkish Embassy staff members in Baghdad receive increasingly inappropriate treatment by the US military and security authorities.

Previously, the Third Secretary of the Embassy was indicated as a "security threat" and was refused to be issued a badge.

This problem was communicated to the US Embassy-Ankara. To day, no response has been given to our request and a badge has not been provided.

On 31 January, the official armored vehicles of the Turkish Embassy-Baghdad were subjected to a thorough search at the entrance of the Green Zone.

The tire of one armored SUV was pierced by the vehicle trap on purpose. Our security personnel were concerned by the danger that the rest of the Embassy vehicles in line were exposed to as a result of this extended stop and search.

The Turkish Embassy's DCM who was present was treated inappropriately by the US soldiers at the gate.

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The stated reason for this action -- that one personnel took a photo of the control point -- is hardly a justification for this kind of unfriendly treatment. We have warned our personnel not to take a photo again.

The following day (1 February), again at the entrance to Green Zone, the official vehicles and the diplomatic personnel together with the members of the Turkish Police Forces Team accompanying them were bluntly reminded of this incident.

They were asked to keep the doors of the vehicle open, step down of the vehicles and were told to walk to another location to be searched. As this was an exposure to danger, they refused to comply with (sic) and left the premises without being able to complete their duties.

Turkey, a NATO ally and a key partner of the US in the region as far as Iraq is concerned, has two diplomatic missions in Baghdad and Mosul.

In order to keep these missions operational, the cooperation of US military and security authorities is decisive. This is fundamental for the missions to be able to continue their work.

END TEXT

16. (C) Text of Turkish MFA note on Badging Issues (handed by former Turkish Ambassador Cevikoz to Ambassador Khalilzad on Dec. 3, copy provided to us Dec. 19, contained in ref email)--as received:

BEGIN TEXT

MNF BADGE APPLICATIONS FOR THE MEMBERS OF TURKISH EMBASSY

As you know many of the Embassies in Baghdad and various Iraqi Ministries are currently located in the Green Zone,

which can be accessed only by those in possession of an MNF badge.

The same situation applies for easy access to the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP).

Therefore obtaining MNF ID Cards that facilitate the entry to these locations has become a de facto prerequisite for members of Embassies, especially for those which are situated outside the Green Zone.

In addition, MNF ID cards are the only form of identification recognized by the international and Iraqi security forces as a proof of identity.

In any case process for obtaining MNF ID cards for the members of the diplomatic missions is a detailed and lengthy one that requires submission of information by the applicants which do not conform to internationally recognized standards concerning treatment of diplomats. However recognizing the extraordinary nature of the security environment that all members of the diplomatic corps need to perform their duties in Iraq, personnel of my Embassy have shown utmost attention to meet all requirements during their applications.

Unfortunately, our attention to conformity with the regulations concerning MNF ID card applications has not been reciprocated. In various cases, there have been long delays for the conclusion of these applications. In some others, application forms were lost by the badge office (JASG Command) that required their resubmission.

Incidents as these and the need to wait at least for 20 to 30 days put our security teams which serve for 90 days in a difficult position as some members of the team do not possess MNF badges and do not have access to the Green Zone or the BIAP. You would understand that, this situation puts members of Turkish Embassy in a position where they will not be able

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to conduct their official business, including contacts with your Embassy.

You would recall that, when such delays left our whole security team without MNF ID Cards at the beginning of this year, we had to ask for intervention of the US authorities in Ankara and Washington to find a solution to this problem. Although we have observed a slightly speeded processing for our applications after this intervention, I have to note that the process is still lengthy and there are various problems concerning members of our security teams and career diplomats.

One of the latest examples is the application for Counselor Muhittin Ahmet Yazal, Deputy Chief of the Mission. He applied for an MNF ID card on 26 September 2006 and after various inquiries we found out that, he required LEP screening to see whether he could receive a badge.

A more disturbing example involves Third Secretary Alper Aktas. When he applied for the renewal of his expired badge, he had to go through an interview, that contained questions which we believe does not fall within customary rules of diplomatic courtesy.

There were also other members of the Embassy who had to wait for more than 1,5 months for their applications to be concluded.

These problems were also brought to the attention of the Commander of the JASG and Deputy Political Counselor of the US Embassy in Baghdad.

On 26 November, two months after his application, we were told that the issue with Mr. Yazal was corrected and it was hoped that he would be "able to finish the process and

receive his badge." On the same day, as for the application of Mr. Aktas, a Turkish diplomat and official representative of our Government, we were informed that, he "will be unable to receive a badge" as the JASG "had received information that causes them some concern" and "determined that it would not be in the best interest of Coalition Forces that he receive a badge."

I would like to strongly stress that the way the applications submitted by my Embassy are handled and the denial of MNF badges to members of my mission are not acceptable.

Since I would like to believe these to be simple mistakes that should be solved in Baghdad, I wanted to bring them to your attention before I reported these incidents to Ankara.

Therefore I would appreciate your personal attention and intervention on this matter for solving these problems and ensuring that they do not repeat in the future.

END TEXT

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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